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PTO/SB/05 (4/98)  
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<b>UTILITY PATENT APPLICATION TRANSMITTAL</b> <small>(Only for new nonprovisional applications under 37 C.F.R. § 1.53(b))</small>	Attorney Docket No.	204,651
	First Inventor or Application Identifier	FOCKE ET AL.
	Title	PROCESS AND APPARATUS FOR PRODUCING AND/OR PACKAGING CIGARETTES
	Express Mail Label No.	EK 051 386 597 US

APPLICATION ELEMENTS <small>See MPEP chapter 600 concerning utility patent application contents</small>	ADDRESS TO: Assistant Commissioner for Patents Box Patent Application Washington, DC 20231		
1. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> * Fee Transmittal Form (e.g., PTO/SB/17) (Submit an original and a duplicate for fee processing)	5. <input type="checkbox"/> Microfiche Computer Program (Appendix)		
2. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Specification [Total Pages 15] (preferred arrangement set forth below) <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Descriptive title of the invention</li><li>- Cross References to Related Applications</li><li>- Statement Regarding Fed sponsored R &amp; D</li><li>- Reference to Microfiche Appendix</li><li>- Background of the invention</li><li>- Brief Summary of the invention</li><li>- Brief Description of the Drawings (if filed)</li><li>- Detailed Description</li><li>- Claim(s)</li><li>- Abstract of the Disclosure</li></ul>	6. Nucleotide and/or Amino Acid Sequence Submission (if applicable, all necessary) <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>a. <input type="checkbox"/> Computer Readable Copy</li><li>b. <input type="checkbox"/> Paper Copy (identical to computer copy)</li><li>c. <input type="checkbox"/> Statement verifying identity of above copies</li></ul>		
3. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Drawing(s) (35 U.S.C. 113) [Total Sheets 4]	<b>ACCOMPANYING APPLICATION PARTS</b>		
4. Oath or Declaration [Total Pages 2] <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>a. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Newly executed (original or copy)</li><li>b. <input type="checkbox"/> Copy from a prior application (37 C.F.R. § 1.63(d)) (for continuation/divisional with Box 16 completed)<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>i. <input type="checkbox"/> <b>DELETION OF INVENTOR(S)</b> Signed statement attached deleting inventor(s) named in the prior application, see 37 C.F.R. §§ 1.63(d)(2) and 1.33(b).</li></ul></li></ul>	7. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Assignment Papers (cover sheet & document(s))		
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		9. <input type="checkbox"/> English Translation Document (if applicable)	
		10. <input type="checkbox"/> Information Disclosure Statement (IDS)/PTO-1449	<input type="checkbox"/> Copies of IDS Citations
		11. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Preliminary Amendment	
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		13. <input type="checkbox"/> * Small Entity Statement(s) filed in prior application, (PTO/SB/09-12) Status still proper and desired	
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16. If a CONTINUING APPLICATION, check appropriate box, and supply the requisite information below and in a preliminary amendment <input type="checkbox"/> Continuation <input type="checkbox"/> Divisional <input type="checkbox"/> Continuation-in-part (CIP) of prior application No. _____ Prior application information: Examiner _____ Group / Art Unit _____ For CONTINUATION or DIVISIONAL APPS only: The entire disclosure of the prior application, from which an oath or declaration is supplied under Box 4b, is considered a part of the disclosure of the accompanying continuation or divisional application and is hereby incorporated by reference. The incorporation can only be relied upon when a portion has been inadvertently omitted from the submitted application parts.			
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**STATEMENT OF FILING BY EXPRESS MAIL 37 C.F.R. § 1.10**

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PATENT DOCKET 204,651

**IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE**

APPLICANT: FOCKE ET AL.

EXAMINER:

SERIAL NO.: Not Yet Assigned

ART UNIT.:

FILED: Herewith

TITLE: PROCESS AND APPARATUS FOR  
PRODUCING AND/OR PACKAGING CIGARETTES

DATE: June 21, 2000

**PRE-EXAMINATION AMENDMENT**

Hon. Commissioner of  
Patents and Trademarks  
Washington, D.C. 20231

SIR:

**STATEMENT OF FILING BY EXPRESS MAIL 37 C.F.R. § 1.10**

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1c498 U.S. PTO  
09/598995  
06/21/00

Please amend the application filed on even date herewith, prior to proceeding with its examination.

IN THE CLAIMS

Claim 3, line 1, delete "or 2".

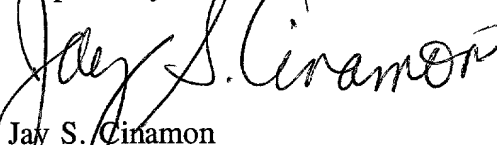
Please add new claim 22, as follows:

-- 22. The process according to claim 2, characterized in that suction air containing tobacco particles (19) is led through a tobacco separator (45), and in that within the tobacco separator (45), in the region of the separating element (48), the tobacco particles (19) are separated from the air and collected.--

REMARKS

It is respectfully requested that the examination of this application proceed on the basis of the amendatory action taken herein and that this amendment be entered prior to calculating the filing fee and according the application a filing date.

Respectfully submitted,



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Our ref.:

FOC-632

27283 Verden

Date: June 15, 2000/5912

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Process and apparatus for producing and/or packaging cigarettes

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Description

The invention relates to a process for producing and/or packaging tobacco products, in particular cigarettes. The invention also relates to a cigarette-producing machine (maker) and a packaging machine for cigarettes (packer).

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In the task of dealing with cut tobacco, in particular during the production and packaging of cigarettes, tobacco particles accumulate to a relatively pronounced extent locally, namely in the region where the tobacco or the cigarettes is/are subjected to mechanical loading. Up until now, said tobacco particles - together with dust and other particles - have been removed during cleaning of the machines.

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The object of the invention is to improve the task of dealing with tobacco particles during the handling of tobacco or tobacco products in conjunction with production and packaging machines.

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In order to achieve this object, the process according to the invention is characterized in that in regions of, in particular, increased accumulation of tobacco particles, on account of said tobacco particles being subjected to mechanical loading, the tobacco particles are intercepted and conveyed away and preferably centrally collected.

Accordingly, one subject of the invention concerns the specific intercepting, removal and collection of tobacco particles in the region where the latter occur to a pronounced extent. Furthermore, according to the invention, the tobacco particles are preferably centrally collected in the region of the relevant machine, or outside the same, and recycled to the production process for cigarettes or other tobacco products.

In packaging machines for cigarettes, the tobacco particles in the region of selected subassemblies - with increased accumulation of tobacco particles - are constantly removed and fed, in particular, to a tobacco separator, which separates the tobacco particles off from an air stream, by extraction by suction and/or by being conveyed away. The tobacco collected in the tobacco separator is removed from the latter and recycled into the production process of the cigarettes. The tobacco separator may be integrated in the packaging machine or installed outside the same as a separate subassembly and connected to the packaging machine via a central suction-extraction line.

Further details of the invention deal with the elements for conveying tobacco particles away, and extracting them by suction, from the region of machine subassemblies and to the configuration and arrangement of the tobacco separator. Exemplary embodiments of the invention are explained in more detail hereinbelow with reference to the drawings, in which:

Figure 1 shows a subassembly of a (cigarette-)packaging machine, namely a cigarette magazine, in side view,

Figure 2 shows, on an enlarged scale, a detail of the subassembly according to Figure 1, namely a region of a belt conveyor,

Figure 3 shows the cigarette magazine according to Figure 1 in transverse view,

5 Figure 4 shows a further detail of the cigarette magazine in a view in accordance with arrow IV in Figure 3,

Figure 5 shows a cigarette-packaging machine in plan view,

10 Figure 6 shows a view of a detail of the packaging machine, namely a suction-line collector,

Figure 7 shows the detail according to Figure 6 in a view offset through 90°,

15

Figure 8 shows a tobacco separator in side view (from the inside), and

20 Figure 9 shows the tobacco separator in an illustration which is offset through 90° in relation to Figure 8.

The overviews and details illustrated in the drawings are concerned with the preferred application example, namely the configuration and functioning of a packaging machine 10 for cigarettes 11. The packaging machine 10 (Figure 5) may be a soft-pack packaging machine, that is to say a packaging machine 10 for producing soft packs. The packaging machine 10 is enclosed by a machine housing 12. Arranged within the same, and on the machine housing 12, are different subassemblies which are concerned with the handling of the cigarettes 11.

A packaging machine for cigarettes 11 contains a cigarette magazine 13 as standard. In the region of (four) shaft groups 14, cigarette groups 15 corresponding to the contents of a cigarette pack are removed from said cigarette magazine. Said cigarette groups are pushed into pockets 16 of a pocket chain 17. The cigarette groups 15 are transported by the pocket chain 17 in the region of a (horizontal) bottom strand 18.

40 There is an increased accumulation of tobacco residues or tobacco particles 19 in the region of the cigarette magazine 13

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position (Figure 3), the (compressed) cigarette group 15 is then pushed out of the pressing pocket, and into a pocket 16 of the pocket chain 17, by a pusher 28. In this case, the cigarette group 15 passes through a mouthpiece 29.

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Tobacco particles 19 are inevitably released in the region of the pressing pocket 27 and/or of the mouthpiece 29. Said tobacco particles fall downwards alongside part of the packaging machine on account of their own weight.

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A further region in which tobacco particles 19 are produced is the rear side of the cigarette magazine 13 in the operating region of the push rods 26. A rear magazine wall 30 is provided with a recess 31 in the bottom region. A further suction-extraction element 32 acts here. A suction member 33 is arranged above the movement plane of the push rods 26 (Figure 4). Said suction member is an elongate body which extends along the rear side of the cigarette magazine 13 in the region of the recess 31. Suction chambers 34 are formed within the suction member 33. These are assigned to in each case one shaft group 14 of the cigarette magazine 13 and are open on the side directed towards the shaft group 14 (Figure 3). The suction chambers 34 are connected to one another, with the result that the tobacco particles 19 can be extracted by suction from the region of the shaft groups 14 via said (four) suction chambers 34.

In the present exemplary embodiment, in each case two suction chambers 34 are connected to one another by a transverse channel 35. Both ends of the suction member 33 are adjoined by a suction-extraction line 36, 37. These, too, are connected to a negative-pressure source and, accordingly, extract the air with the tobacco particles by suction from the region described.

35

The pocket chain 17 or the bottom strand 18 thereof with the filled pockets 16 is provided over the entire conveying section with an intercepting element for tobacco particles 19. This is a conveying belt 38 beneath the bottom strand 18 of the pocket chain 17. The conveying belt receives tobacco particles 19 falling downwards under their own weight and conveys said



tobacco particles - counter to the conveying direction of the pocket chain 17 - to the intercepting hopper 20.

The tobacco particles received by the intercepting hopper 20  
5 are led downwards and received beneath the intercepting hopper  
by a collecting element, namely a collecting belt 39. The  
latter is dimensioned in the transverse direction, namely  
widthwise, such that the tobacco particles falling downwards  
alongside the intercepting hopper 20, namely from the region of  
10 the pressing pocket 27, can also be received by said collecting  
belt 39.

The tobacco particles 19 received by the collecting belt 39 are  
transferred to a conveying-away element, namely to a suction  
15 tube 40. The latter is arranged at the end of the collecting  
belt 39, namely in the region of a deflecting roller 41. The  
suction tube 40 partially encloses the deflecting roller 41.  
The wall of the suction tube 40 is provided with an opening 42.  
The deflecting roller 41 is positioned in the region of the  
20 same, with the result that the collecting belt 39 with the  
tobacco particles runs into the suction tube 40. The latter  
extends in the axial direction of the deflecting roller 41. The  
suction tube 40 is connected to a negative-pressure source and  
conveys the tobacco particles as is illustrated in Figure 3.

25 The tobacco particles extracted by suction or conveyed away in  
the region of the individual elements and subassemblies are  
expediently collected. In the present exemplary embodiment, the  
suction-extraction lines 25, 36, 37, which extend within the  
30 packaging machine 10 from the individual subassemblies, and  
suction-extraction tube 40 lead to a central, common suction  
tube, namely a main tube 43. The latter is provided with a  
hopper-like connecting member 44 which allows a plurality of  
suction lines or suction tubes to be connected to the central  
35 main tube 43.

The main tube 43, in turn, is connected to a tobacco separator  
45. The latter may be arranged as a subassembly in the  
packaging machine 10, namely within the machine housing 12. In  
40 the present exemplary embodiment (Figure 5), the main tube 43  
leads to the tobacco separator 45 from the rear side of the

packaging machine 10 or of the machine housing 12. Said tobacco separator is positioned, as a cabinet-like structure, at a distance from the packaging machine 10, on the rear side of the latter.

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The tobacco separator 45 constitutes a further particular feature of the apparatus. The main tube 43 leads into a cabinet-like housing 46 from above. A fan 47 driven by an electric motor is positioned in the top region within said housing. The negative pressure is produced by said fan. For this purpose, air is conveyed downwards from the main tube 43. The suction air emerging from a bottom, open end of the main tube 43 is deflected by a separating element 48. This is a rounded wall which, together with a side wall of the housing 46, forms a container in which the tobacco particles 19 are collected by falling downwards. The air flows along the arrows, that is to say through the separating element 48 in the upward direction and then, alongside the separating element 48, through air filters 49 provided there. The latter are three filter cartridges which are located one beside the other and are of commercially available construction. The top end is connected to a transversely directed supporting wall 50 in the tobacco separator 45. The supporting wall 50 has through-passage openings 51 in the region of the air filters 49. The region above the supporting wall 50 is subjected to the action of negative pressure by the fan 47, with the result that the air is taken through the air filter 49 by suction. The air is cleaned in the air filters 49 and passes outwards through an outlet opening 52.

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Compressed-air nozzles 53 are arranged above the supporting wall 50, in the region of the air filters 49. Said nozzles serve for cleaning the air filters 49 with the aid of compressed air and, from time to time, lead a compressed-air surge from a pressure tank through the air filters 49 in order to clean residues from the latter.

A special feature is that the intercepted and collected tobacco particles 19 can be recycled into the production process. The separating elements 48 can be emptied for this purpose. The container-like wall which forms the separating element 48 is

arranged on an upright side wall 54 of the tobacco separator 45. Located in this region is a removal opening which is intended for the tobacco particles 19 and can be closed off by a flap 55 as part of the side wall 54. For the removal of the tobacco particles 19, the flap 55 is opened (dashed-line position in Figure 9). The tobacco particles can then be removed, to be precise via a chute 56. The latter is positioned at a height which allows a vehicle or a movable receiving container to be positioned beneath the chute 56 for the purpose of receiving the tobacco particles 19.

A further intercepting element, namely a collecting container 57 which is open at the top, is arranged beneath the separating element 48 and also beneath the air filters 49 for the purpose of receiving any possible particles of dust. Said collecting container is designed as a drawer and can be drawn laterally out of the tobacco separator, namely via the side wall 54.

The abovedescribed elements and subassemblies for intercepting tobacco particles and conveying them away may also be arranged analogously in the case of other subassemblies and elements of the packaging machine, but in particular also correspondingly in the case of a maker.

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Our ref.: FOC-632-BR/CN/US

27283 Verden

Date: June 15, 2000/5912

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Process and apparatus for producing and/or packaging cigarettes

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P a t e n t   c l a i m s

1. Process for producing and/or packaging tobacco products, in particular cigarettes (11), characterized in that in the regions of, in particular, increased accumulation of (free) tobacco particles (19), on account of the cigarettes (11) being  
5 subjected to mechanical loading, the tobacco particles (19) are intercepted and conveyed away and preferably centrally collected.
2. Process according to Claim 1, characterized in that the  
10 tobacco particles (19) are transported away by extraction by suction and/or by collecting on conveying elements - conveying belts.
3. Process according to Claim 1 or 2, characterized in that  
15 suction air containing tobacco particles (19) is led through a tobacco separator (45), and in that within the tobacco separator (45), in the region of a separating element (48), the tobacco particles (19) are separated from the air and collected.

4. Process according to Claim 1, characterized in that, once the tobacco particles (19) have been separated out, the suction-extraction air is cleaned, in particular with the aid of air filters (49) within the tobacco separator (45), the air  
5 being led through the air filters (49).

5. Apparatus for producing cigarettes (maker) or for packaging cigarettes (11) or other tobacco products (packer), in each case with elements and subassemblies for handling the  
10 tobacco or the tobacco products, in particular cigarettes (11), characterized by the following features:

a) arranged in the region of the elements and subassemblies for handling the tobacco or the cigarettes (11) are  
15 collecting elements, conveying elements and/or suction-extraction elements for the purpose of receiving tobacco particles (19) caused to accumulate on account of the handling,

20 b) the intercepted and/or collected tobacco particles can be conveyed away by the conveying elements and/or by suction lines,

c) the tobacco particles (19) can be fed by the conveyors  
25 and/or suction lines to at least one tobacco separator (45), which separates off, and collects, the tobacco particles (19),

d) the intercepted and collected tobacco particles (19) can  
30 be removed from the tobacco separator (45).

6. Apparatus according to Claim 5, characterized in that arranged in a packaging machine (10) for cigarettes (11), in the region of a cigarette magazine (13) for forming cigarette  
35 groups (15), is at least one suction-extraction element (32) for the purpose of extracting tobacco particles (19) by suction.

7. Apparatus according to Claim 6, characterized in that the  
40 suction-extraction element (32) is arranged in a rear region of the cigarette magazine (13), in particular directly above the

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movement plane of push rods (26) for pushing cigarette groups (15) out of the cigarette magazine (13).

8. Apparatus according to Claim 7, characterized in that the  
5 suction-extraction element has a suction member (33) which is directed towards ends of the cigarettes (11), in particular filter ends thereof, extends transversely over the entire width of the cigarette magazine (13) and has suction chambers (34) for receiving suction air with tobacco particles (19), the  
10 suction chambers (34) being open at least partially on the side directed towards the cigarettes (11) in the cigarette magazine (13).

9. Apparatus according to Claim 8, characterized in that at  
15 least one suction-extraction line (36, 37), preferably two suction-extraction lines (36, 37) arranged at mutually opposite ends, is/are connected to the suction member (33) and/or to the suction chambers (34) for the purpose of extracting air with tobacco particles (19) by suction.

20 10. Apparatus according to Claim 5, characterized in that in the region of a conveyor for cigarettes (11) or cigarette groups (15), in particular in the region of a pocket chain (17) with pockets (16) for receiving in each case one cigarette  
25 group (15), at least one suction-extraction subassembly (23) is positioned, in particular in the region where the cigarette groups (15) are pushed into the pockets (16) of the pocket chain (17).

30 11. Apparatus according to Claim 10, characterized in that the suction-extraction subassembly (23) has a suction-extraction housing (24) which partially encloses the cigarette conveyor or the pocket chain (17), in particular in the region of a top side and a longitudinal side, a suction-extraction  
35 line (25) adjoining the suction-extraction housing (24).

12. Apparatus according to Claim 5, characterized in that tobacco particles (19) falling downwards under their own weight are intercepted, and transported away, by conveying elements,  
40 in particular by conveying belts (38, 39), it being possible for the tobacco particles transported by the conveying belts to

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be fed preferably to a suction-extraction subassembly for the purpose of the tobacco particles being transported further by means of suction air.

13. Apparatus according to Claim 12, characterized in that arranged beneath cigarette conveyors, in particular beneath the pocket chain (17) or beneath a bottom strand (18) of the same, is a conveying belt (38) which extends in the longitudinal direction of the pocket chain (17) or of the bottom strand (18), it being possible for tobacco particles (19) intercepted by the conveying belt (38) to be fed to a collecting element, preferably an intercepting hopper (20).

14. Apparatus according to Claim 5, characterized in that  
15 tobacco particles falling downwards under their own weight are  
intercepted, and directed further, in the region of increased  
accumulation by collecting elements, preferably by the  
intercepting hopper (20), a further conveying element for  
tobacco particles (19), in particular a collecting belt (39),  
20 being arranged beneath the intercepting hopper (20).

15. Apparatus according to Claim 5, characterized in that tobacco particles (19) transported by a belt conveyor, in particular by the collecting belt (39), can be fed to a suction-extraction subassembly, in particular to a suction tube (40) which is arranged in the region of a deflecting roller (41) of the collecting belt (39) and partially encloses the deflecting roller (41) such that the tobacco particles can be conveyed into the suction tube (40) by the collecting belt (39).

16. Apparatus according to Claim 5, characterized in that the tobacco particles (19) received in the region of a packaging machine and/or of a maker can be fed to a preferably central tobacco separator (45), individual suction-extraction lines 35 which run within the packaging machine and/or within the maker opening out, via a connecting member (44), in a main tube (43), which leads to the tobacco separator (45).

17. Apparatus according to Claim 5, characterized in that the  
40 tobacco separator (45) is positioned, as a cabinet-like  
structure, outside the packaging machine (10), at a distance

from the same, the main tube (43) leading out of the packaging machine (10) to the tobacco separator (45).

18. Apparatus according to Claim 5, characterized in that, within a housing (46), the tobacco separator (45) has a fan (47) for producing suction air, it being possible for the taken-in air, which is mixed with tobacco particles (19), to be fed to a separating element (48) for separating off the tobacco particles (19), and for the air freed from the tobacco particles (19) then to be led outwards by the fan (47).

19. Apparatus according to Claim 18, characterized in that, once the tobacco particles (19) have been separated off in the region of the separating element (48), the taken-in air can be led through cleaning elements, in particular through air filters (49).

20. Apparatus according to Claim 5, characterized in that, in the region of the separating element (48), the tobacco separator (45) has a removal arrangement for collected tobacco particles (19), in particular a flap (55) which is positioned at a distance from the base.

21. Apparatus according to Claim 17, characterized in that, on its top side, the main tube (43) passes into the housing (46) of the tobacco separator (45), and in that, once it has been separated off and, if appropriate, cleaned, the air emerges from the housing (46) via an outlet opening (52) likewise provided at the top.

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Our ref.:

FOC-632

27283 Verden

Date: June 15, 2000/5912

Abstract  
(in conjunction with Fig. 9)

Process and apparatus for producing and/or packaging cigarettes

During the production of cigarettes, but in particular in the  
region of a cigarette-packaging machine, a comparatively large  
5 amount of tobacco accumulates as waste. This is specifically  
removed by arranging suction-extraction elements and/or  
conveying-away elements for tobacco particles (19) in the  
region of elements and subassemblies of the machines with  
increased accumulation of tobacco. The air with tobacco  
10 particles (19) which has been extracted by suction is led  
through a tobacco separator (45), which has a separating  
element (48) for receiving the tobacco particles. From time to  
time, these are removed from the tobacco separator (45) and  
recycled into the production process.

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List of designations

10	Packaging machine	41	Deflecting roller
11	Cigarette	42	Opening
12	Machine housing	43	Main tube
13	Cigarette magazine	44	Connecting member
14	Shaft group	45	Tobacco separator
15	Cigarette group	46	Housing
16	Pocket	47	Fan
17	Pocket chain	48	Separating element
18	Bottom strand	49	Air filter
19	Tobacco particles	50	Supporting wall
20	Intercepting hopper	51	Through-passage opening
21	Hopper wall	52	Outlet opening
22	Guide rod	53	Compressed-air nozzle
23	Suction-extraction subassembly	54	Side wall
24	Suction-extraction housing	55	Flap
25	Suction-extraction line	56	Chute
26	Push rod	57	Collecting container
27	Pressing pocket		
28	Pusher		
29	Mouthpiece		
30	Magazine wall		
31	Recess		
32	Suction-extraction element		
33	Suction member		
34	Suction chamber		
35	Transverse channel		
36	Suction-extraction line		
37	Suction-extraction line		
38	Conveying belt		
39	Collecting belt		
40	Suction tube		

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Fig. 1

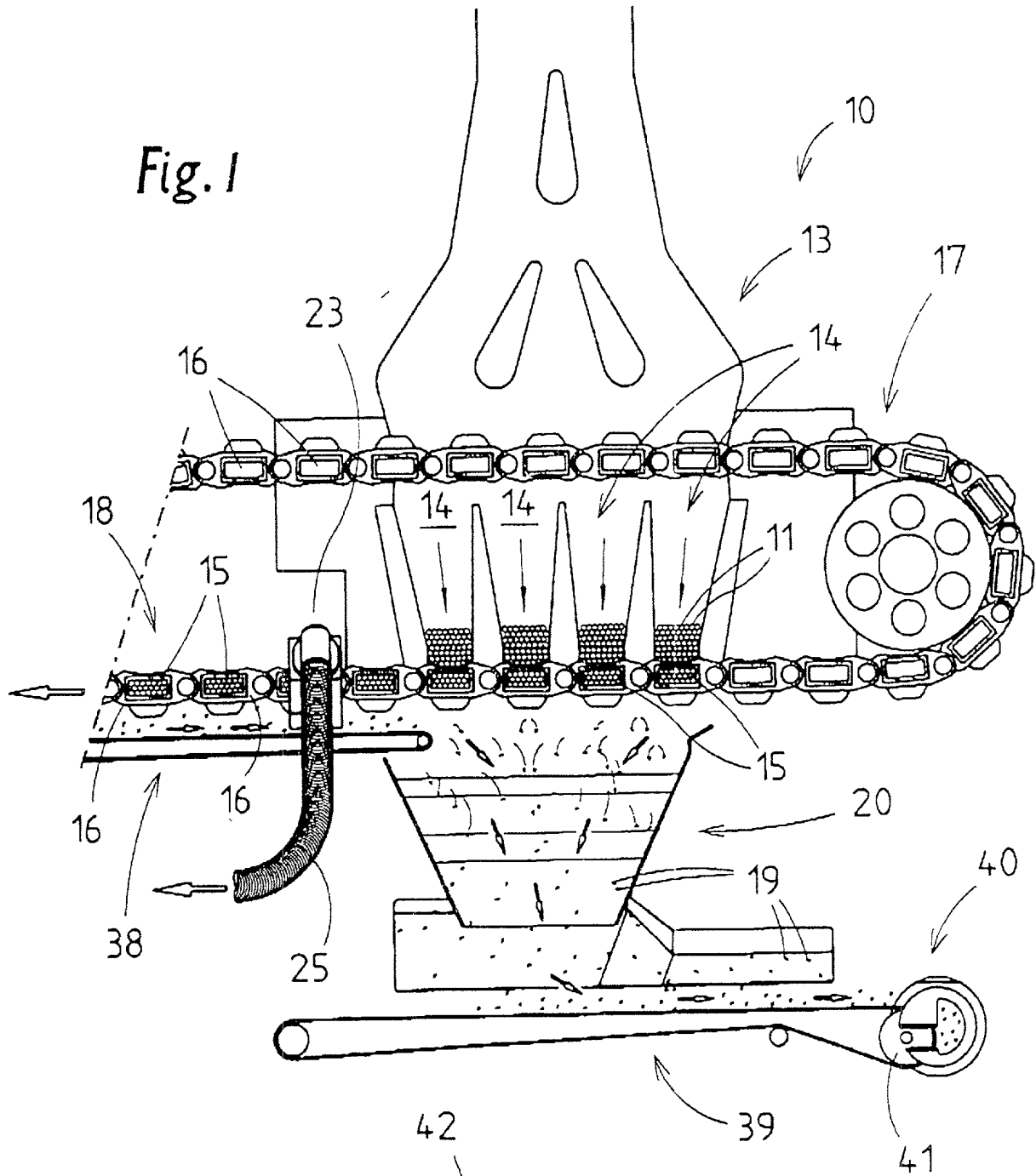
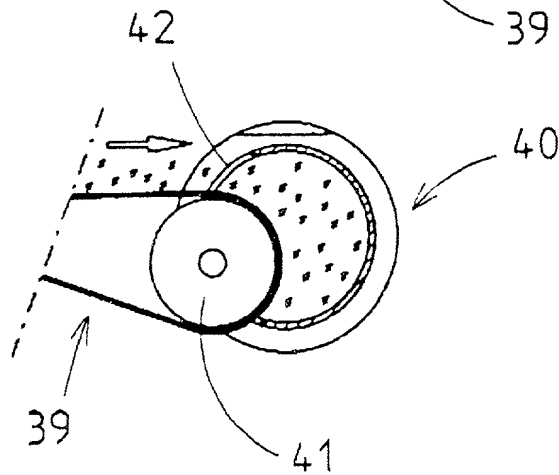


Fig. 2



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Fig.4

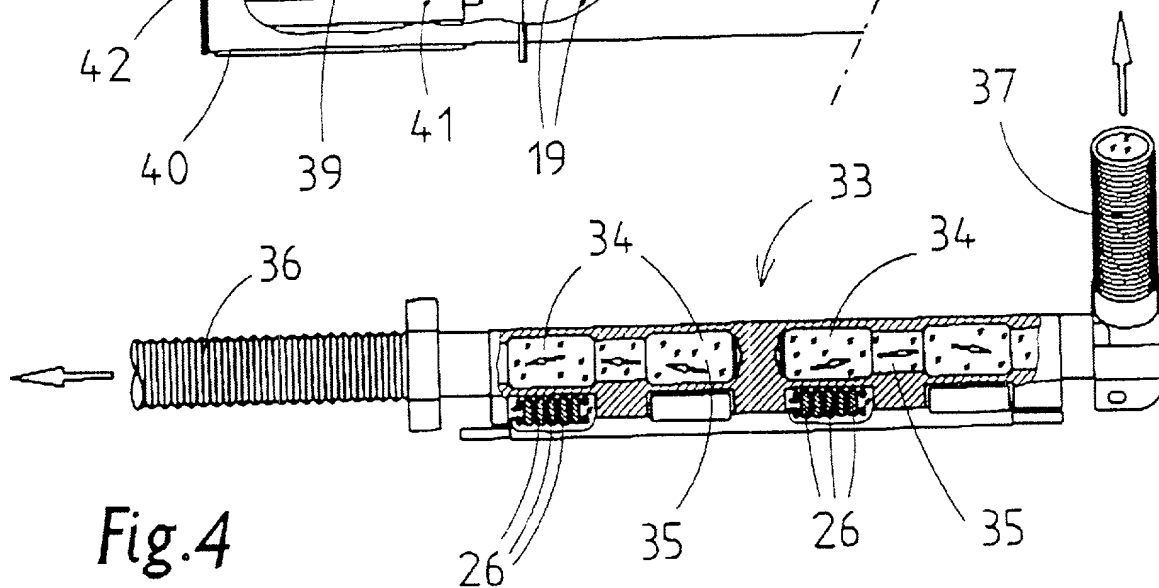
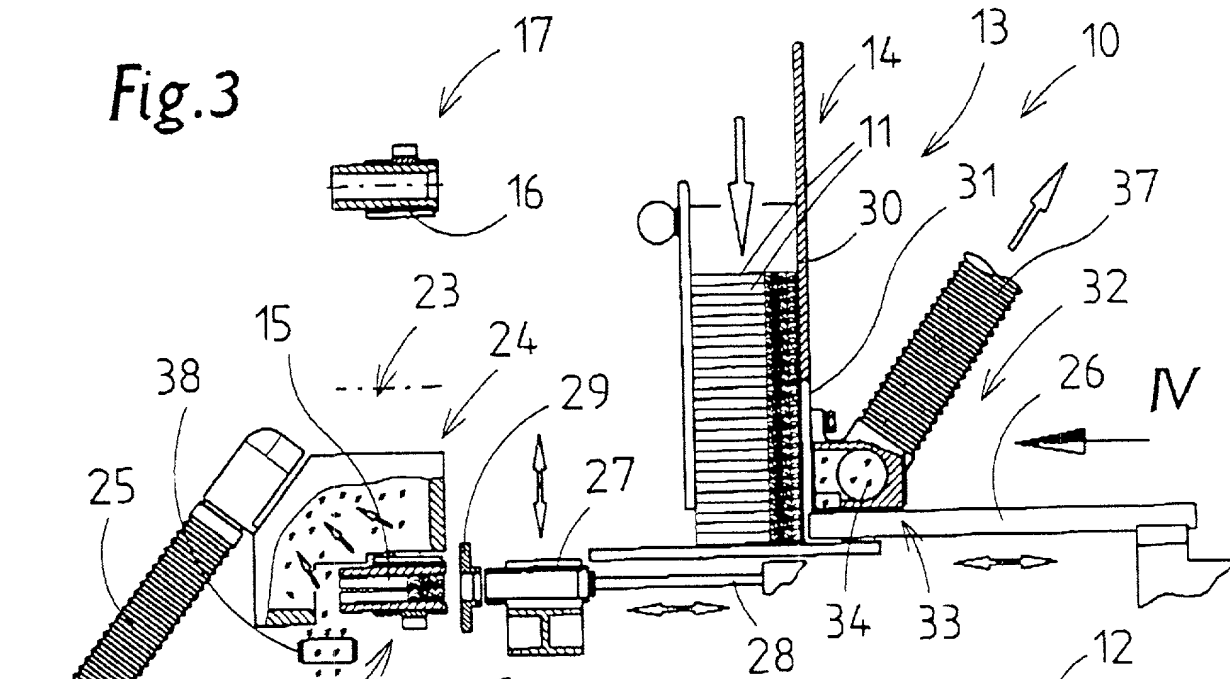


Fig.3



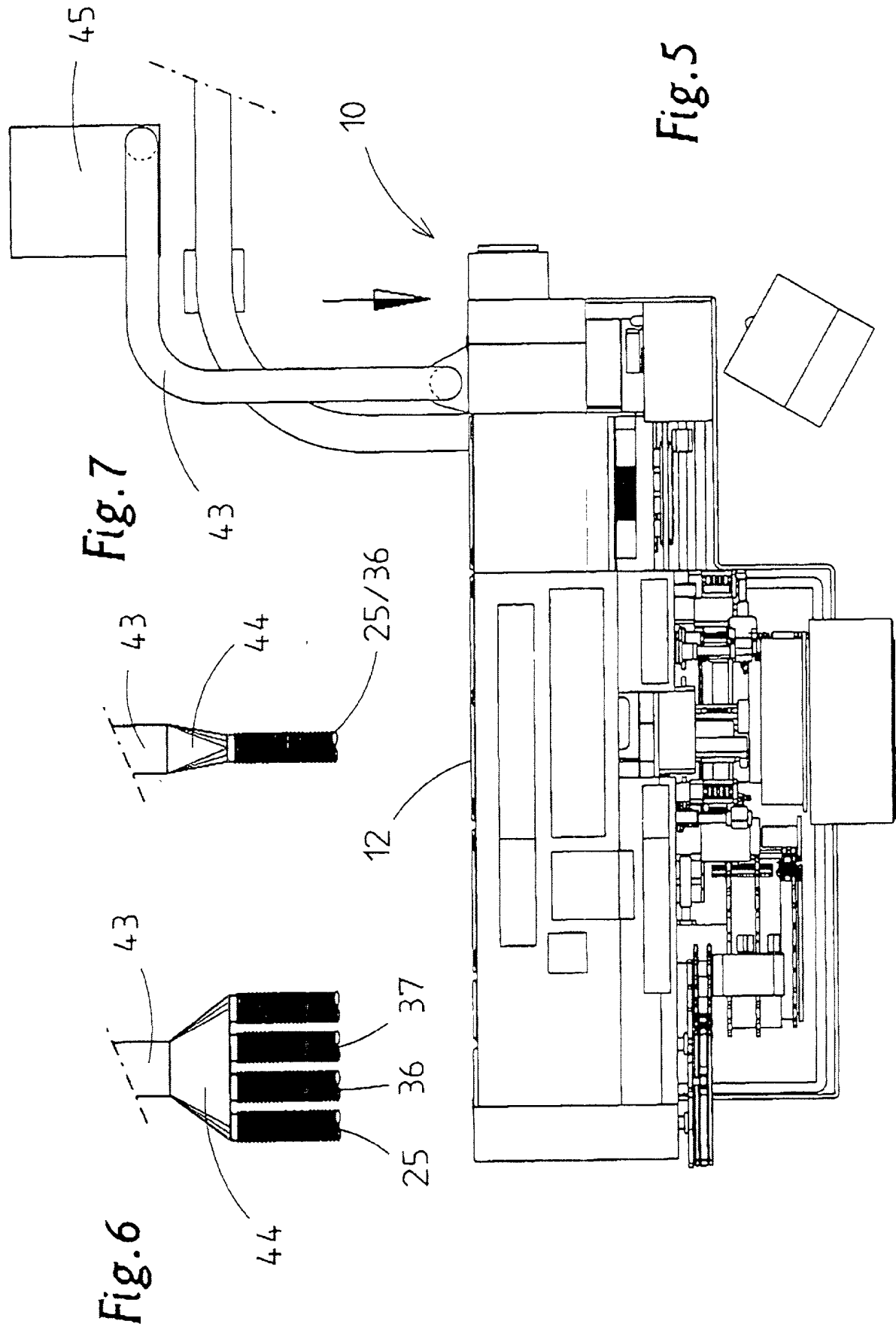


Fig.8

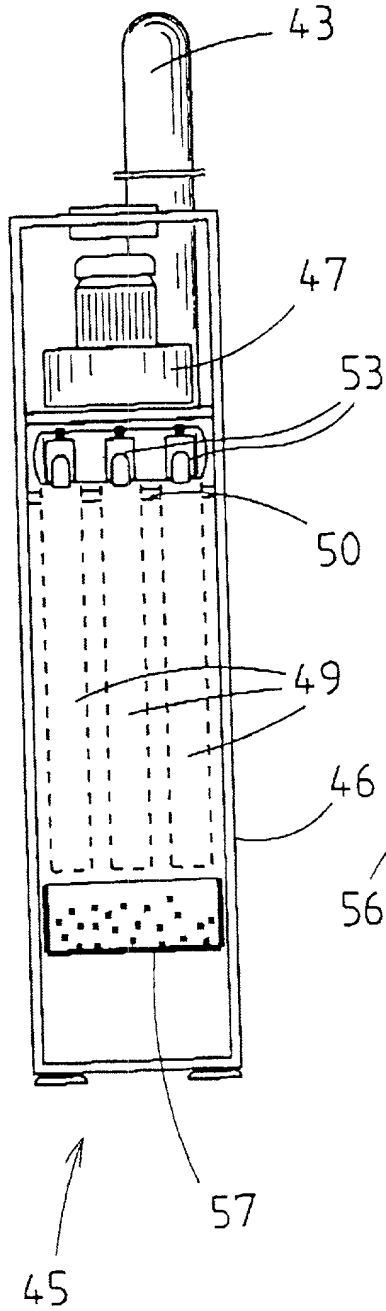
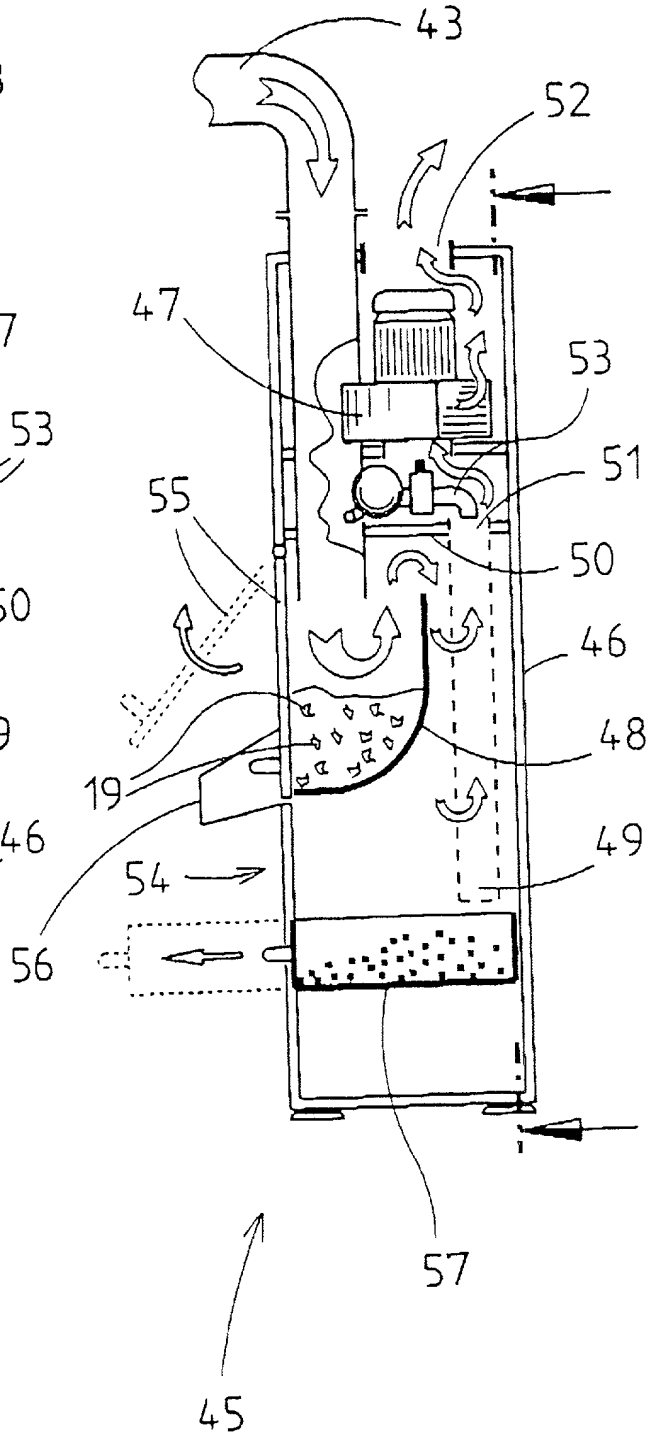


Fig.9



## UNITED STATES

<b>PATENT APPLICATION</b> <b>DECLARATION AND POWER OF ATTORNEY - ORIGINAL APPLICATION</b>	<b>ATTORNEY'S DOCKET NO.</b>
--	------------------------------

As a below named Inventor, I hereby declare that:

My residence, post office address and citizenship are as stated below next to my name:

I verily believe I am the original, first and sole inventor (if only one name is listed below) or a joint inventor (if plural inventors are named below) of the invention entitled

(1) TITLE OF  
INVENTION

(1) Process and apparatus for producing and/or packaging cigarettes

the specification of which

(2) ☒ is attached hereto.

(2) CHECK  
APPROPRIATE  
BOX

☐ was filed on \_\_\_\_\_ as Application No. \_\_\_\_\_

and was amended on \_\_\_\_\_ (if applicable).

I hereby state that I have reviewed and understand the contents of the above identified specification, including the claims, as amended by any amendment referred to above.

I acknowledge my duty to disclose information of which I am aware which is material to the examination of this application under 37 CFR 1.56(a); the invention has not been patented or made the subject of a inventor's certificate issued before the date of this application in any country foreign to the United States of America on an application filed by me or my legal representatives or assigns more than twelve months prior to this application; and as to applications for patents or inventor's certificate on the invention filed in any country foreign to the United States prior to this application by me or my legal representatives or assigns,

(3) ☐ no such applications have been filed, or

(3) CHECK  
APPROPRIATE  
BOX

☒ such applications have been filed as follows:

(4) COMPLETE  
DATE INDICATED  
IF APPLICABLE

EARLIEST FOREIGN APPLICATION(S), IF ANY, FILED WITHIN 12 MONTHS PRIOR TO THIS APPLICATION				
Country	Application Number	Date of Filing (day, month, year)	Date of Issue (day, month, year)	Priority Claimed Under 35 USC 119
(4) Germany	199 28 360.5	21/06/99		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
				<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
ALL FOREIGN APPLICATIONS, IF ANY, FILED MORE THAN 12 MONTHS PRIOR TO THIS APPLICATION				
(4)				

I hereby claim the benefit under Title 35, United States Code § 120 of any United States application(s) listed below and, insofar as the subject matter of each of the claims of this application is not disclosed in the prior United States application in the manner provided by the first paragraph of Title 35, United States Code, § 112, I acknowledge the duty to disclose material information as defined in Title 37, Code of Federal Regulations, § 1.56(a) which occurred between the filing date of the prior application and the national or PCT international filing date of this application.

(5) COMPLETE  
DATE INDICATED  
IF APPLICABLE

(5) \_\_\_\_\_ (Application Ser. No.) (Filing date) (Status: patented, pending, abandoned)

(5) \_\_\_\_\_ (Application Ser. No.) (Filing date) (Status: patented, pending, abandoned)

**Power of Attorney:** As a named inventor, I hereby appoint the following attorney(s) and/or agent(s) to prosecute this application and transact all business in the Patent and Trademark Office connected therewith.

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I hereby declare that all statements made herein of my own knowledge are true and that all statements made on information and belief are believed to be true; and further that these statements were made with the knowledge that willful false statements and the like so made are punishable by fine or imprisonment or both under Section 1001 of Title 18 of the United States Code and that such willful false statements may jeopardize the validity of the application or any patent issued thereon.

(6) DETAILS  
 REQUIRED  
 FOR EACH  
 INVENTOR

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Residence	Citizenship	
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Full Name of Fourth Joint Inventor, If Any	Inventor's Signature	Date
Residence	Citizenship	
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Residence	Citizenship	
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Full Name of Sixth Joint Inventor, If Any	Inventor's Signature	Date
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